



DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER • 815 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

alter H. Boyd, Press Officer
n. Drew Dearnaley, Assistant Press Officer

Telephone: (212) 867-8400

January 13, 1983

CONTENTS

PAGE

- Church of England Irks Establishment (83011) 1
- Hawaii's Bishop Praises Fund's Speedy Response (83012) 3
- Health Forces Pina to Resign See (83013) 4
- McNutt Issues Peace Plea in Statewide Forum (83014) 5
- Memo: February Meeting of the Executive Council (83015) 7

#

CHURCH OF ENGLAND IRKS ESTABLISHMENT

DPS 83011

LONDON (DPS, Jan. 13) -- The established Church of England is finding itself at odds these days with certain segments of the Establishment, notably the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher and its supporters.

During the Falklands war last spring, Church leaders were either openly supportive or silent and the government had reason to think that -- apart from the "radical fringes" -- the Church would remain supportive or passive on military and international issues. The months since have jarred that assumption and brought the entire issue of the role that a Church can play in a nation's affairs to the foreground.

The question was first raised when St. Paul's Cathedral, here, was chosen as the site for a national service of thanksgiving at the conclusion of the Falklands war. Many in the nation and government viewed the event as a "Victory Celebration" and were surprised, dismayed and angered when Dean Alan Webster and Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury made it very clear that the focus and intent of the service would be thanksgiving for the end of hostilities and compassion for the victims of war.

-more-

DPS 83011/2

In his sermon at the somber-toned rite, Runcie decried war as "a sign of human failure," and said that the grief of victims' kin was a reminder of the terrifying power of destruction possessed by humanity.

His stand, and that of Webster, won immediate support and praise from Roman Catholic, Protestant and Anglican church leaders, many of whom had taken part in the service. But the point was apparently lost on the prime minister who was said to be angry and on others, including one Conservative who called it "revolting" and spoke of "cringing clergy."

The next cringing action was to bring to public attention a report that suggests Great Britain withdraw unilaterally from the nuclear weapons stage.

This report, which the General Synod of the Church is expected to take up next month, is designed to provoke debate on the role of smaller nations in controlling nuclear proliferation. Discussion in Synod is likely to focus on whether or not the Church has the right to provoke that debate. The authors of the report feel the Church has a duty to do so, and there is growing evidence that Church leaders will continue in that role.

The most recent evidence to that came in the furor over a Christmas sermon in which Runcie -- who led armored troops in World War II combat -- denounced the growing tendency to consider nuclear war winnable and expressed support for peace demonstrators.

With American Cruise missiles scheduled to become part of the arsenal in Britain this spring, such demonstrations have been increasing in size and strength and some Conservative politicians reacted angrily to the sermon.

Church spokesmen were quick to play down the talk of a rift between the party and the Church but no one seems to deny the notion that the Church of England is using its prophetic voice more often.

In doing so, wrote Oxford Bishop Patrick Rodger, the Church must be aware of the "passionate partisanship of our times" which, he warns, "may soon place a great strain on the fellowship of the Church."

It is the hope of Rodger, Runcie and the Church leaders that the almost unexpected use of the prophetic voice will help make people aware that current divisions are too sharply drawn to be workable and that new attitudes need to be developed.

Runcie's Christmas sermon summed up the tenor of the debate: "We need the man with the child in his eyes, in alliance with the man who has left childish things behind him to give hope and courage to the man with pain in his mind."

DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

HAWAII'S BISHOP PRAISES
FUND'S SPEEDY RESPONSE

DPS 83012

SAN FRANCISCO (DPS, Jan. 13) -- Bishop Edmond Browning's soft, quiet drawl was in sharp contrast to his topic: the hurricane that swept through the Hawaiian Islands in early December.

Browning, here for a meeting of the Province VIII Council, told of the heavy damage and destruction wrought by the hurricane in his diocese, especially in the Islands of Oahu and Kauai. He spoke, too, of the Episcopal Church's response through the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.

"We received an immediate, direct grant of \$10,000," said Browning. "An additional \$10,000 was requested for us by the province." The province also requested that dioceses in the western United States and the Pacific basin make special contributions to the Fund earmarked for hurricane relief in Hawaii.

"On the third day after the hurricane, I established a small committee of three clergy and five lay people to determine how we should use the money that was sent to us. Our goal was to relieve immediate suffering and to restore people to normal living," Browning explained.

About 110 families were helped. "In some cases we provided food. Some roofs were patched. We brought tickets to San Francisco for a pregnant woman and her three small children. Many needs were met."

One contribution received from the Diocese of California was earmarked for "some R&R" for the Hawaiian clergy who had worked in hurricane relief. "That was really welcomed," said Browning, while pointing that the need goes on.

Most of the remaining work is in counseling, help for the unemployed and pastoral support.

"We're working ecumenically on this now," he noted, "but the immediate response through the Fund, well, for many, it made the province come alive."

#

DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

HEALTH FORCES PINA
TO RESIGN SEE

DPS 83013

NEW YORK (DPS, Jan. 13) -- The Rt. Rev. Hugo L. Pina has notified the Presiding Bishop and the Church Center staff that he has resigned as bishop of Honduras for health reasons.

In announcing his resignation, the bishop thanked the people and clergy of the diocese for their support and cooperation during the four-and-one-half years of his episcopate. "You have meant a lot to me and you will always have a place in my heart. I thank you for all you have done for me and my family and for the extension of the Kingdom, but I must leave you because of my health," he told them.

Pina, 44, suffers from acute high blood pressure.

The diocese has already appointed a nominating committee and an election for Pina's successor will probably take place before summer.

A native of Cuba, the bishop served parishes in Havana and Miami before becoming a missionary in Honduras in 1975. He was consecrated as bishop of the diocese in 1978.

A strong emphasis on evangelism has marked Pina's episcopate and there are now some 26 missions in that Central American diocese. In a recent interview, he explained the growth in a straightforward manner: "We are not embarrassed to talk about the faith. We are not afraid to enter into new areas and we boldly ask people to close ranks in an effort to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Pina, who is married and the father of three children, did not reveal his immediate plans.

#

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

MCNUTT ISSUES PEACE PLEA
IN STATEWIDE FORUM

DPS 83014

HARRISBURG, Penna. (DPS, Jan. 13) -- Episcopal Bishop Charlie F. McNutt carried the theme of the latest House of Bishops pastoral letter into the heartland recently when he told delegates to a statewide farm show that "squandering the earth's resources on the undiminished production and deployment of nuclear weapons is immoral and unjust."

The bishop of Central Pennsylvania made his remarks in a sermon at services opening the Pennsylvania Farm Show on Jan. 9. McNutt asked the congregation of 700 farmers and their families to "think of what could happen if just a fraction of what is spent on armaments of destruction could be spent instead on developing food resources."

A spokesman for McNutt conceded that the annual farm show is not usually a forum for hard hitting sermons but said that the bishop's sermon had been generally well-received. McNutt's theme echoed the pastoral which was issued at the General Convention last September and which called arms expenditures "an act of aggression against the 30 children who die every 60 seconds of starvation" and a "callous act of indifference to the 500 million people of the world who are underfed."

In his sermon, the bishop addressed the problems of food production and world hunger and encouraged all people of conscience to respond to the root causes of world hunger. Good stewardship, he believes, in principle, favors local production for local consumption.

Focusing that principle on Pennsylvania, he noted that 71 percent of the food Pennsylvanians consume is grown out of state. "Yet, in terms of climate and available farmland, Pennsylvania could be largely self-sufficient in the food it consumes."

Ironically, he observed, while Pennsylvanians spend some \$8.6 billion each year on food from out of state, some 1,000 farmers in the state go out of business. In the past 10 years, he reported, some 12,000 farms were lost.

"The family farm is an institution well worth preserving," he continued. "Somehow, the people who work close to the soil develop a unique perspective and a sense of morality that our society desperately needs. For our spiritual health as well as our physical well-being, we need to preserve the family farm."

He also spoke of stewardship in terms of preserving farmland. "Every eight months in Pennsylvania," he said, "an area the size of Pittsburgh is lost from agricultural production to development."

"Land is a finite resource. Once it has been paved over or divided into housing units, whose concern is it that food continues to appear on the grocery store shelves?"

Soil erosion also takes its toll on Pennsylvania's farmland, the bishop said, presenting a direct challenge to the stewardship of each farmer.

He returned to the theme of the arms race in his concluding remarks, noting that "the folly of our current arms race graphically illustrates the poor stewardship we are providing over the resources of God's good earth."

#

DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE/Episcopal Church Center 212/867-8400

MEMO: FEBRUARY MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

DPS 83015

TO : Diocesan Press Service Clients

FROM: The Press Office

DATE: February 9-11, 1983

The 40-member Executive Council of the Episcopal Church will meet in Charleston, S.C., Feb. 9-11. Plenary sessions will take place at the Mills House Hotel where the Council members will be staying. Standing committees will meet at St. Michael's Episcopal Church near by.

This is the stated annual meeting, so the agenda will include some items dealing with the corporate structures. It is also the meeting that generally deals with the greatest number of stockholder resolutions since corporate annual meetings are held in the Spring.

The members will also be asked to address a resolution concerning a presidential commission charged with developing a uniform determination of death statute.

If the normal pattern is followed, the Council will spend most of Wednesday -- after a brief opening plenary -- in committee sessions. Committees usually meet again Thursday morning and then plenary business sessions follow from mid-morning through afternoon and again on Friday morning. The Council usually does not hold evening sessions.

Council sessions are open to members of the press who are on their own for housing and meals. Document production is expected to be limited, so please let us know IN ADVANCE if you plan to attend all or part of the meeting so that we can assure adequate numbers of copies. The deadline for notifying us is close of business Feb. 7. Please call us at the above number (exts. 401-403) or write us at the Church Center, 815 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017.

#

